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SUBJECT: USSC AND EGYPTIAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS DISCUSS
PALESTINIAN PRESIDENTIAL GUARD TRAINING

Sensitive but unclassified. Not for internet distribution.

Summary

¶1. (SBU) US Security Coordinator (USSC) representatives asked Egyptian Ministry of Defense (MoD) officials to consider training Palestinian Presidential Guard (PG) forces and toured a potential training facility during their May 16-17 visit to Cairo. MoD officials expressed unambiguous interest in training the PG in the range of mission essential tasks USSC described, but requested detailed requirements in order to provide a cost estimate. MoD will confirm officially its willingness/ability to train the PG by early June. End summary.

USSC Presidential Guard Training Proposal -----

¶2. (SBU) During a May 16 introductory meeting, USSC representatives COL Rupp, John Collins and LCDR Martin, joined by Emboffs, asked the Deputy Chief of MoD's Training Authority, MG Fattah Farrag, if Egypt has the capability and willingness to train Palestinian Presidential Guard forces in Egypt. MoD's MG Ahmed Mo'taz, Director of US relations, BG Ahmed Agad, Egyptian Training Authority, and LTCOL Mohammed Fouad, Egyptian Training Authority, also attended the meeting. After COL Rupp provided an overview of the PG training proposal, he and Mr. Collins made the following points:

-- Substance of training: The Palestinians and USSC have not yet finalized and prioritized the tasks considered essential to the PG mission. The tasks may include: presidential protection, VIP security, rapid response to law and order incidents, security of high profile court cases, security of election committees, special operations (counter-terrorism, hostage rescue), and border security. USSC will give MoD the detailed prioritized requirements as soon as they are final.

-- Funding limits: US regulations prohibit the use of the USG funding to finance the procurement of vehicles or of equipment needed for lethal training. USSC will explore other possible sources of funds for these needs.

-- Vetting: The US and Israel will vet the names of proposed PG trainees.

-- Training format: The training will include a core program in the "mission essential tasks," as well as a parallel train-the-trainer program.

-- Training package: The US would expect Egypt to provide the trainees with classroom instruction, field training, billeting/mess, medical care, and transport.

-- Training Duration/timing: The US would like the training to begin by August 2007. The course program will likely run in six-week sessions for a period of six months.

-- US Oversight: The USG will require that USSC, Department of State, and USG civilian contractors have access to the training facility and trainees in order to observe, assist, and report on the USG-sponsored program.

¶3. (SBU) COL Rupp asked MG Farrag to advise in official channels of the GOE's willingness and capability to provide PG training. The USSC representatives also asked MoD to consider allowing State/DS ATA trainers to train Presidential Guard forces at an Egyptian facility. MoD officials said that this would be difficult, given Egyptian sensitivities, and suggested instead that the MoD provide that training as well.

Ministry of Defense Ready and Willing to Train PG

¶4. (SBU) MoD officials expressed a strong interest in training the PG. They predicted they will be able to train in all of the possible mission essential tasks, but asked for USSC's specific training requirements and more detail on the unit sizes in order to provide cost estimates. MoD officials also pressed for information on the amount of money available for the training. MG Mo'taz asked if the "59 million" he had heard mentioned during a recent visit to Washington was the applicable figure. The USSC representatives declined to discuss finances, noting only that there is a very limited

amount of money set aside for PG training. MoD officials stressed that USSC would need to identify a source of funding for the equipment that the US will not fund (lethal and vehicles).

¶5. (SBU) On May 17, MoD and USSC officials and emboffs visited the Haykstep military base, which MoD proposes using for PG billeting/mess, infirmary, classroom instruction, and designated field exercises. MG Farrag said that the GOE is refurbishing the facilities specifically for the Palestinians at GOE expense, but would not seek reimbursement for this work. The base, which is located approximately 30 kilometers east of Cairo, is approximately 10-15 kilometers from the ranges where the bulk of the tactical training will occur. MG Farrag offered to arrange a visit to the tactical training site during the second week of June. COL Rupp said he will need to see all training sites and facilities. The USSC and MoD officials agreed to confer further on details of the proposed training via the embassy representatives in the coming weeks.

¶6. (U) USSC representatives Rupp and Collins cleared this cable.

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